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PRAIRIE FARMS DAIRY, INC.  
GENERAL OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 560  
CARLINVILLE, IL 62626

September 1, 2005

The Honorable Mike Johanns  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S. W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

I am very sorry to have missed the opportunity to meet with you in person today at the Farm Progress Show. Philip Nelson, the President of the Illinois Farm Bureau was kind enough to personally deliver this letter to you so that I could share a few thoughts with you about the Farm Bill.

Prairie Farms Dairy is a Farmer Owned Dairy Cooperative and an affiliate of the Illinois Farm Bureau. The ownership of Prairie Farms is among active dairy farmers basically located in the states of Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and Indiana. Prairie Farms net sales in 2004 were \$1,180 and our joint venture companies including Hiland Dairy, Roberts Dairy and Muller Pinehurst give us total managed sales dollars of dairy products exceeding \$2 billion. We operate 30 manufacturing plants in 8 Midwest states providing employment to over 4,000 associates.

As an officer of a dairy cooperative and a board member of the International Dairy Foods Association, I commend you on your efforts to gather input from across the country for this important piece of legislation. With budget constraints and trade obligations, I realize that the job you are undertaking is a difficult one. But at least as far as dairy is concerned, I think that it is possible to craft legislation that is trade compliant, fiscally responsible and that will allow farmers and processors to thrive in the global marketplace.

If we are going to remain competitive with other products in our market as well as in a more global economy, we must update our federal dairy policies, many of which date back to the Great Depression. In addition, access to world markets will hinge on trade compliance and that will inevitably impact the structure and type of programs we use to provide a safety net for our dairy producers in the U.S. As you address these safety nets in the next Farm Bill, I urge you to consider a program for dairy producers that will provide a fair opportunity for all farms and a strong market opportunity for our products.

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In the end, a less regulated dairy industry will mean a healthier one because demand for our products will increase. Farmers, processors and consumers all stand to gain if the industry is unburdened and is allowed to meet its full potential.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my suggestions. I wish you the very best in your work with the Farm Bill. If I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (217) 854-2547.

Sincerely,

PRAIRIE FARMS DAIRY, INC.



Roger D. Capps  
Executive Vice President  
Chief Executive Officer

RC:sb

cc: Philip Nelson,  
President Illinois Farm Bureau  
Fred Kuenstler,  
President, Prairie Farms Dairy

Roger Capps  
Executive Vice President, CEO  
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